

Weston Commission for Children and Youth Minutes from the April 18, 2016 Meeting

In attendance: Lynn Phillips, Jeff Drobner, Allison Lisbon, Cathy Minter, Ellen Weyrauch, Shara Kolodney, Dru Walters, Juliane Givoni, Chris Powers, Michelle Albright, Charlene Monn, Lindsey Kapel, Danny Petty

Meeting called to order at 5:48 pm by Michelle Albright.

Approval of Minutes

- Minutes from the January meeting were approved (Jeff first, Ellen second), as well as from the March meeting (Cathy first, Allison second)

Program Coordinator Updates

- Spring WOW! programs began today and are scheduled to run through the week of May 23rd. We are running 18 programs at HES (13 at full capacity) and 9 at WIS (4 at full capacity).
- The April 26th mini-camp was canceled due to low enrollment. Members discussed the differing response to this compared to the November Election Day mini-camp and how the time of year, the difference in class content, and the extra promotional time could have influenced interest and registration.
- Sitter safety ended for the year, and there is one more session of spring drivers ed scheduled. Jeff thanked Charlene for her helpful and informative follow up on comparing the various drivers education programs offered in our region.
- Summer camp registration is currently underway; WYS is running a variety of camps including cooking, robotics, legoflix, art, and legos, and we are collaborating with WPS to offer additional music, theater, and technology camps.

Director Updates

- The parenting workshop held on March 30th (facilitated by Tracey Masella and Aaron Krasner from Silver Hill) in collaboration with Wilton Youth Services, Wilton Youth Council and Silver Hill Hospital was well attended – approximately 60 in the morning and 25 in the evening, however this includes residents from Weston, Wilton, and Westport.
- The Tackling workshop on the college application process held on April 7th was attended by 10 parents.
- We are collaborating with WPS and Positive Directions to host a panel on current substance use trends on April 19th – we will be holding both a daytime and evening session to accommodate parents' varying schedules. I've also been speaking to Meghan Skelton at the high school to determine how best to coordinate and implement programs to reduce substance use and abuse.
- Three current high school seniors will be joining WYS as interns starting May 1st. We are hoping they will assist with reviewing the WYS website and even helping create one aimed at kids, as well as reviewing program ideas and content to ensure that its relevant and appealing to students.
- We are reviewing how best to promote and communicate regarding our program offerings; one idea under consideration is creating a newsletter with both tips as well as program updates.
- We are continuing to explore how best to coordinate with Lachat Town Farm – Michelle has been meeting with Ellen McCormick to discuss a range of ideas and we have decided to partner to pilot a summer camp for children entering grades 3-5 (it will run the last week of July and the first week of August). We will serve as administrators for this camp (as we do for the WPS camps) and in exchange will receive a portion of the registration revenue. As the farm expands we are hopeful that we will be able to collaborate on additional programming during the school year.

Discussion about key topics of interest and relevance for commission and community members

- Members also discussed how to enhance community awareness of WYS programs and services. Members discussed piggy-backing on events that draw large audiences such as Election Day, Memorial Day Fair, and

Trunk and Treat and having materials a/o giveaways to hand out. Members also discussed trying to get our events included in the school calendar.

- Members discussed various issues that affect children and families in our community and suggested an overarching theme focused on identifying stress/anxiety and improving coping skills. Members advocated for a systematic approach that targets children at different ages and how they experience stress/anxiety and how to foster corresponding developmentally appropriate coping skills and strategies.
- Members also discussed how best to address substance use and abuse among children and families in our community. Student members shared their viewpoints about the attitudes of peers, as well as school policies, and Michelle shared feedback from other students she has met with. Most students do not have accurate or detailed information about school policies, and do not view these as a deterrent. Members discussed how to balance punishment versus intervention and ensure that students and families receive necessary interventions.

Meeting adjourned at 6:54 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Michelle Albright